

**Hall-Wattens - an open-air shopping centre**  
**"Shop till you drop" - but in a town centre of manageable proportions with a wide range of stores**

**Hall-Wattens - If you have a horror of overcrowded shopping malls and airless department stores, then you will enjoy an extended shopping trip in the towns of Hall in Tirol and Wattens. Instead of being swept from store to boutique by the crowds, in both these towns those in search of a little retail therapy can stroll through a manageably-sized and romantic town centre, where there's a wide range of retail outlets. Markets offer regional farmers' specialities ... with a great holiday atmosphere guaranteed.**

As long ago as 1569, one impressed visitor remarked that Hall was "an efficient trading centre, populous and larger than Innsbruck". The beautifully restored "historic core" dating from the 14th century is twice as big as the Tyrol's provincial capital 10 kilometres away. With an abundance of shops, boutiques and traditional craftsmen from all sectors, a comparison between the former salt town and an open-air shopping centre springs to mind. While visitors wander from tea shop, to perfume store and then on to optician, they will be simply enchanted by the historic backdrop. A range of nice cafés, smart bars and friendly cake shops provide welcome fortification before setting off for the next purchase.

Every Saturday, the farmers' market attracts customers to the Obere Stadtplatz. From stalls set between church and town wall, farmers vie with one another to sell their regional specialities. Then there's the Wednesday market, open from 15.00 until 21.00, when Hall traders sell fresh produce, such as fruit and vegetables, bacon, cheese, Italian pancakes, smoked fish and stone-baked bread, Styrian delicacies, herbs from the Alpine meadows and handicrafts from the region. With more than 60 shops to choose from, the evening shopping excursion, well away from the check-out queues and empty shelves, becomes a pleasurable experience. In the weeks before Christmas, locals and visitors often congregate on the squares to sip glühwein, punch and tuck into *Kiachl* or Tyrolean-style doughnuts at the popular Christmas market, now with a reputation that extends way beyond the confines of the town. Chatting to friends while warmly-wrapped up in schawl and anorak surrounded by this medieval scene, it will seem as if you've travelled back in time to an earlier century.

A shopping trip on foot in the market town of Wattens is also perfectly possible. Around 130 shops here offer a wide range of goods. There's simply everything you could want: from fabrics, shoes, hand-bags and swimwear to sports articles, cosmetics, flowers, books and banks. You'll certainly need to keep your credit card handy. Friendly and knowledgeable sales personnel

are available to give customers advice. The shop's proprietor may often intervene personally to help you make your choice. The shopping area is separated into three central sections - and all are accessible without a car. You will be inevitably drawn to the Crystal Shop in André Heller's famous Swarovski Crystal Worlds and when your eyes alight on those glittering souvenirs, jewellery and works of art, expect to come under a magical spell.

A farmers' market, selling quality produce from the surrounding area, takes place here every other week. Everything is prepared using traditional methods and meet organic criteria in full. Hall-Wattens has mastered the fine art of seduction like no other region in the Tyrol. Every year, the eleven towns and villages of Absam, Baumkirchen, Fritzens, Gnadewald, Hall in Tirol, Mils, Thaur, Tulfes, Volders, Wattenberg and Wattens welcome visitors from all over the world. Breathtaking wonders of nature meet up with historic town centres and an unparalleled programme of cultural events. Valued traditions and idyllic villages coupled with a lively cosmopolitan atmosphere. And last but not least, ultra-modern hotels, delightful guest-houses, cosy pubs and superb restaurants powerfully reflect the region's special character.

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